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THE (BEHAVIORAL) ECONOMICS OF MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract. *This paper takes a closer look at three highly interrelated areas of media accountability: the “three Cs”. The Cs are defined as follows: 1. corrections policies, 2. complaints management, and 3. coverage of journalism and media by the media. Focusing on the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, we will try to explain the extent to which “rational economic” behavior can be found in this specific field of self-inspection, and how “predictably irrational” (Ariely 2008) media owners, media managers and journalists make decisions, and how cultural norms and behavior patterns influence media accountability and the processing of ‘unethical’ or unprofessional behavior.*

Key words: *the behavioral economics, media accountability, “rational economic” behavior, cultural norms and behavior patterns.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, key events have raised the public’s interest in media accountability and ethics in journalism: in the German speaking world, the populist Pegida movement accusing the mainstream press of lying (“Lügenpresse”) has attained a lot of public attention, and a pamphlet dealing with corruption in journalism turned into a bestseller (Ulfkotte 2014). Even more recently, the way the press dealt with the crash of a Germanwings airplane, its kamikaze co-pilot and the 149 victims raised a lot of public concern, indicated by 430 complaints to the national press council. In the Anglosaxon world, earlier and most notably, the presentation of the Leveson Report concerning the criminal activities of Murdoch’s *News of the World*, the BBC’s maneuvering to veil the pedophilic misconduct of one of its most prominent TV moderators raised awareness. All over Europe, the propaganda battles stemming from the wars in Ukraine and in the Near East and the rapid spread of disinformation across social networks led to additional concerns.

All these instances have triggered discussion about journalism ethics and media accountability, an area in which little economic analysis has been performed. Based on an

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economic theory of journalism (Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2005; Hamilton 2004; Russ-Mohl 1994, ch. 4) and its first ‘extensions’ into behavioral economics (Russ-Mohl 2009, 2010, 2015; Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2014), this paper takes a closer look at three highly interrelated areas of media accountability: the ‘three Cs.’ The Cs are defined as follows: 1. Corrections policies, 2. Complaints management and 3. Coverage of journalism and media by the media.

Focusing on the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, we will try to explain the extent to which ‘rational economic’ behavior can be found in this specific field of self-inspection, and how ‘predictably irrational’ (Ariely 2008) media owners, media managers and journalists make decisions, and how cultural norms and behavior patterns influence media accountability and the processing of ‘unethical’ or unprofessional behavior.

The primary questions are:

- Why does the media not pay more attention to the three Cs, even though doing so would be institutionally beneficial?
- Why have media accountability institutions worked fairly well in some countries, while they are nonexistent or ineffective in others?
- How does media accountability change under conditions of media convergence?

More specifically, we would like to discuss whether there are economic explanations for the following questions:

- Why are corrections policies close to nonexistent in Europe while they are well established in the US?
- Why have ombudsmen become comparatively strong and visible in the US (though some were abolished during the recent years of crisis), while remaining marginal in the UK and Germany and virtually nonexistent in Italy?
- Why do some countries (like Switzerland) have a comparably strong and visible press council as well as (weak and non-visible) ombudsmen (mostly required by law), while other countries (like the US) have (visible and strong) ombudsmen (without legal requirement), but no national press council, or rely more heavily on a national press council than on ombudsmen (Germany)?
- Why is media journalism neglected by most quality media outlets belonging to huge media conglomerates (like *Die Welt* of Springer AG or *The Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* of News Corp.), while a handful of more independent newspapers (like the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *tageszeitung*) dedicate more attention to this peculiar but important genre?

We will proceed to explore the aforementioned issues in several steps. Firstly, we explore the argument that investments in media accountability make sense not only from a public interest perspective, but also serve the institutional self-interest of media companies, particularly those dedicated to products of high journalistic quality addressing educated publics. Second, we will discuss how media executives and journalists rationalize underinvestment in media accountability. This will be followed by an analysis of how underinvestment can be further explained by ‘predictably irrational’ behavior, based on insights provided by behavioral economics and social psychology. Next, we will discuss how these irrational behaviors may be better explained by specific cultural patterns of decision-making. Lastly, the final portion of the paper will summarize the ways in which media accountability continues to change under the conditions of Web 2.0 and media convergence, and how the lighthouses of journalistic quality may be affected if they do not change their attitudes toward the three Cs.

2. MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY AS A WORTHY INVESTMENT

From a business (and thus economic) perspective, media executives should invest in media accountability. Media accountability is not at all costly – in fact, it is rather cheap.

- Correction corners require the attention and dedication of a newsroom, but they do not cost ‘real’ money.
- Costs for press councils are usually low, as members will work on an honorary basis or for low compensation. As costs for supporting press councils are shared by many media companies, they are negligible in budgets.
- Ombudsmen are mediators. In most media outlets an ombudsman will hold a part-time position, which might even be an honorary, unsalaried role.
- Media journalists are more expensive, but need not necessarily be added to an existing newsroom. Costs for media journalism can be kept low if the section is created by shifting resources within the newsroom. If the top editors agree that media and journalism are important topics of coverage, they may dedicate existing space, reporters and editors to such specialized reporting.

Media accountability also pays off, in that it promises returns:

- If ombudsmen and press councils work well, this can be considered an “insurance policy” against more costly, time absorbing risks. They are effective mediation systems, reducing the costs for legal advice and legal battles. According to Klaus Kocks (2013, 95), who provides a more cynical view, a press council is “the publisher’s PR agency tasked with muddying the systemic facts with accidental criticism”. If press councils communicate their decisions to the public and to newsrooms effectively, and if ombudsmen write regularly as columnists about media and journalism, both institutions provide insight into the rationale behind news decisions, foster relationships with readers, increase journalism’s credibility, and educate journalists and the public about the media. Thus, they improve media literacy and quality consciousness.
- Ultimately, increased quality consciousness of recipients should also increase their willingness to pay for high journalistic quality.

So why do media companies invest so little in media accountability?

If we take a second glance, we may have to differentiate and add to the assumption that each media system can be divided in a *lower* and an *upper quality segment*, concerning the journalism being offered. The size and the percentage share of the upper segment will vary from country to country, from journalism culture to journalism culture – and in some countries there may be a more clear separation of ‘black’ and ‘white’ market segments (UK, Germany), while in other countries ‘shades of grey’ will dominate (US, Switzerland and Italy).

If we apply traditional neoclassical economic theory to the problem of media accountability, the question of whether media companies will invest in accountability and behave ethically can be answered easily: a rational, self-interested choice for increased accountability and ethics will be made if it pays off. On the other hand, unethical behavior will increase if it significantly reduces the cost of production (potential ‘premium’), if the probability of getting caught is low, and if the potential sanctions aren’t terribly drastic (Entorf and Spengler 1998, 348).

Concerning media accountability, there exists a built-in conflict of interest between the lower and the upper market segments:

- The business success of the upper segment depends more and more on the recipients' willingness to pay and on increasing the share of recipients interested in credible, high quality journalism. In the upper segment, unethical behavior like manipulation, copy-and-paste journalism, plagiarism and corruption will likely be detected by the recipients, and the damage to the brand and to the newsroom will be more hazardous than in the lower segment.
- The lower segment will serve audiences with lower levels of education and media literacy, and possibly a higher interest in entertainment than in-depth news. It will be more advertiser-driven and less dependent on generating revenues from recipients. In this segment there is a reduced institutional interest for media companies and newsrooms to increase credibility, the audiences' media literacy and their own media accountability.

Thus, we may have to modify the initial statement: if media executives *in the upper quality segment* were rational, self-interested actors primarily concerned about the economic wellbeing of the media institutions and newsrooms they are responsible for, they would invest considerably more in media accountability than they have done so far. Accountability is in the rational *institutional* self-interest of such media companies. They need to protect the integrity of their brands and the credibility of the newsrooms. In the lower segment, the premium for non-compliance with media accountability and ethical behavior is higher, and the likelihood of getting caught and punished for noncompliance is considerably lower.

Still, the question persists regarding why such investments remain rare in the upper segment as well. There are four "rational" answers which may help solve the puzzle:

1. Aside from the conflict of interest between the upper and lower quality segments of the media, there is a second and potentially more intriguing conflict between the *institutional* and the *personal* self-interests of media owners, media managers and top editors. Media executives are certainly aware of what they are doing to others when they scandalize politicians, CEOs and other members of the celebrities' club (Kepplinger 2012; Pörksen and Detel 2012) – and they simply may not want to become victims of the same tortures.

2. The relationship between media executives and press councils or ombudsmen can also be seen as a *principal-agent relationship*, where information asymmetries occur (Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2005, 137; Russ-Mohl 2009, 115). As 'principals,' media executives may mistrust whether ombudsmen, press councils or media journalists serving the industry as 'agents' might abuse their positions, power and knowledge. For example, two of the *New York Times's* ombudsmen – Daniel Okrent and Bryan Calame – became obsessed with fighting the then editor in chief Bill Keller (Bandler 2004; Calame 2006; Elia 2007, 63), and by doing so, they endangered the very institution of the Public Editor.

3. Media companies may also find themselves in a *prisoner's dilemma* (Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2005, 52; Russ-Mohl 2009, 117). If they remain the only ones implementing the three Cs because competitors do not follow, they risk compromising themselves. The costs will be due immediately, while the benefits of the more costly accountability policies (ombudsmen, media journalists) will only materialize if they are shared among the media operating in the upper market segment.

4. Most media in the upper segment operate within huge media conglomerates. Some of them may even be flagships of their companies (e.g., *USA Today* of Gannett, *Die Welt* of Springer AG, and *Tages-Anzeiger* of Tamedia). In many cases, the cash cows of these companies are in the lower segment, perhaps even subsidizing the flagships. Under such conditions, it becomes difficult for the flagships to 'independently' support policies of

media accountability. The overarching institutional interests of the conglomerate will outweigh the institutional interests of the media in the upper market segment.

Hence, the self-serving interests of top decision-makers in media companies will win over the institutional interests of media companies (this is not uncommon, given the endless discussions about disproportionate salaries and bonuses of top managers). The institutional interests of the mother companies will have a stronger effect on media accountability policies than the institutional interests of their 'upper class' subsidiaries. These are plausible arguments, yet they do not completely explain the underinvestment in media accountability.

3. RATIONALIZING THE STATUS QUO AND INDECISIVENESS

People are not always rational decision makers, but they tend to rationalize their decisions (Aronson 1968, 6; Schönbach 2009). Similarly, media executives rationalize their indecisiveness and disengagement in the field of media accountability.

They usually do so by declaring that audiences are neither interested in media accountability nor media journalism (Kreitling 1996; Russ-Mohl and Fengler 2000; Fengler 2002). They also state without further proof that press councils, ombudsmen, and media journalists may have negative effects on journalistic credibility. They may even go so far as to counterattack institutions like press councils, claiming they are superfluous and endanger press freedom (Isaacs 1986, referring to *The New York Times*; Russ-Mohl 1994, 165), that they impede journalistic investigation (Twickel 2012), or by mobilizing, like most recently the German *Bild-Zeitung*, readers against the press council's verdict. Even research results that provide proof of the opposite (Russ-Mohl 1994; Urban 1999; Fög 2010 and 2011) came under attack: according to some publishers, they were irrelevant and should be ignored (Supino 2010; Lebrument 2011 and 2012; Staun 2012). Two populist papers in Austria – *Kronen-Zeitung* and *Österreich* – filed lawsuits against the press council.

4. BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

By rationalizing indecisiveness and underinvestment, media executives may become victims of *selective perception* and *cognitive dissonance* (Aronson 1968; Kahneman and Tversky 2000; for recent summaries: Dobelli 2011 and 2012) – though the following paragraphs are somewhat speculative and are certainly in need of further empirical proof.

Abolishing media sections and specialized media journalists from newsrooms (as occurred at the *Tages-Anzeiger* in Switzerland, *Die Zeit* in Germany and *Il Sole-24 ore* in Italy) can be attributed to the self-conscious preoccupations of media executives who fear negative coverage and scandalization. The actual danger of such actions is overrated and such anxieties are likely based on *neglect of probability* (Tversky and Fox 2000). If you are not Rupert Murdoch yourself, it is highly improbable that you will be scandalized by competing newsrooms. Yet there are well known examples of 'successful' attempts (e.g. Axel Springer was scandalized in the late 1960s by *Spiegel* and most left-leaning mainstream media outlets in Germany, and later Hubert Burda and Leo Kirch by the Springer press) which probably created '*anchors*' (Tversky/Kahnemann 1992) for media owners, media managers, or top-editors. This bred expectations that in the future something similar might happen to them, based on the selective perceptions of the past.

Zero cost craze is another trap in which media executives may fall prey. If one does not invest in media accountability, this seemingly implies ‘zero cost’ – and as Ariely (2008) has pointed out, all of us tend to behave irrationally if we can get hold of a ‘freebie’. However, the enjoyment of freebies rarely works in the long run, as hidden costs accompany them. The enthusiasm for zero cost is paired with media managers and journalists’ ignorance that they must frequently work against the dynamics of *markets for lemons* (Akerlof 1970). In such markets, buyers are either unaware of quality differences of products or services or unable to judge them. Sellers who want to continue to provide high quality products need to develop specific strategies to communicate the quality of their offerings in order to justify the higher price. Some educational efforts may be necessary to increase recipients’ willingness to pay for journalism. Besides media education in schools, mainly serious media journalism can provide the credible platforms which are needed for such discourse. However, those willing to make the first move may be caught in the prisoner’s dilemma, as they cannot cover themselves with credibility. The ‘platform system’ will only create benefits for media in the upper market segment if there are several media outlets who participate and observe one another, hence meeting the professional standards of un-biased reporting.

If top editors resist the institutionalization of ombudsmen, they will also likely become victims of the *overconfidence effect* (Vallone 1990; Dobelli 2011, 13), the *control illusion* (Langer 1975; Dobelli 2011, 65) and of *loss aversion* (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Tversky and Kahneman 2000).

The overconfidence and control illusion effects mean that editors are unaware of their own limits in handling errors and conflicts adequately and with a certain ‘distance’. They underestimate the time needed for mediating and problem solving in cases of conflict about media coverage, but also in coaching their own staff.

The concept of *loss aversion* has so far been primarily applied to physical properties, but it can also be adapted to the loss of power. Introducing an ombudsman and accepting a press council means some sharing of responsibility in defining ethical standards for top decision makers in the media. Thus, such individuals may stand to lose some of their own power, which may be (irrationally) perceived as more risky and costly than the opportunity to gain additional credibility, reputation and status by iterative cooperation with accountability institutions.

Another factor impeding innovation in the field of media accountability is the *endowment effect* (Kahneman et al. 1991 and 2000; Ariely 2008, 127). This concept can be also applied to explain the underinvestment in media accountability. We tend to overvalue not only our estates and possessions, but also existing procedures and routines which have become a kind of ‘social capital’ and are therefore difficult to change or abolish (Downs 1967, 158). As long as the public refrains from actively demanding more accountability and transparency, media executives and journalists will continue their routine of neglecting to provide it.

A form of irrational behavior most media actors are quite aware of is *reciprocity* (Trivers 1971), and thus the fear of revenge. This is one more reason why the three Cs and media journalism in particular remain low key. In the event that a media executive or media company is publically scandalized by other media outlets, those reporting the scandal remain aware that the next opportunity for revenge is always just around the corner.

5. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The significant cultural differences existing even among highly developed Western countries are deeply rooted in history. Traditions, norms, and religious beliefs should not be underestimated and may shape rational and irrational behavior considerably. Since the heroic efforts of Hallin and Mancini (2004) to distinguish ‘liberal-market oriented’ from ‘polarized-pluralist’ and ‘corporatist-democratic’ media cultures in Western Europe, additional research to grasp such differences among media systems and to create typologies has been conducted and this has resulted in more sophisticated schemes and analyses (Blum 2005 and 2014; Wessler 2010; Hallin and Mancini 2011; Esser and Hanitzsch 2012; Fengler et al. 2014).

Once more, in explaining such differences in ‘media accountability cultures,’ behavioral economics and social psychology provide useful insights: *Herd behavior* in journalism and in the media industries (Fengler and Russ-Mohl 2005, 166; Cipriani and Guarino 2008, 2; Russ-Mohl 2009, 120; Stiglitz 2011) creates a strong momentum when newsrooms become engaged in scandalization (Lloyd 2011; Kepplinger 2012; Pörksen and Detel 2012), as well as when they must make decisions about their own futures. For example, the combination of poorly institutionalized press councils, strongly institutionalized ombudsmen and the appearance of corrections columns in the US may be explained in part by the *New York Times*’ leadership role. The newspaper opposed a national press council (Isaacs 1986), was early to introduce a Public Editor (i.e. ombudsman), and dedicated a great deal of attention to its corrections columns and correction policies. Many other news media have since followed both its bad and good examples.

Similarly, media executives in countries with negligible media accountability activity (like Italy) may have become victims of *groupthink* (Janis 1972), of *social proof* (Cialdini 2001; Dobelli 2011, 17) – and, again, of *herd behavior*. There, however, the lack of the three Cs must be seen in a larger context. It is unrealistic to expect media accountability infrastructures to flourish in a country where the legal system is compromised, where mafia-like activities surpass the government and penetrate the economic system, where you find little appreciation for the public interest, and even less conscientiousness for public space (Falk 2003, 162).

6. OUTLOOK AND SUMMARY

So, what is next? Under the conditions of media convergence, with a wide array of blogs and social media flaunting increased interactivity and linking options, traditional mainstream media have lost their monopoly over gatekeeping, news distribution and agenda setting. They are also rapidly losing control over media accountability processes and procedures (Eberwein 2010; Fengler et al. 2013, 213-230).

6.1. Perspectives for media practitioners and newsrooms

In the blogosphere, social networks and interactive Web 2.0 environment, new forms of ‘crowdsourced media accountability’ (Fengler 2012) are developing. If media executives working in high quality media do not change their policies towards the ‘three Cs,’ making their activities more transparent, this behavior may further contribute to the decline of high quality journalism.

Given the cultural differences between the journalism cultures mentioned here and the speed with which the Web 2.0 environment changes, it is impossible to forecast whether this will be a slow erosion or an expeditious process, as the recent “Lügenpresse” (=lying media) chorus of the Pegida movement in Germany might suggest. The result depends not only on media executives’ decisions, but also on the decisions of the media users. Is their media literacy increasing or decreasing? Will they demand more media accountability by using their ‘voice option’ or will they rather take the ‘exit option’ (Hirschman 1970) and disappear as recipients of media that does not meet their expectations of being accountable, transparent, and credible? Without an increasing demand for media accountability from the recipients, media executives may continue to deal with the issue using something they may conceive as ‘rational ignorance’ (Downs 1957) – though our analysis has provided strong arguments positing that this kind of ignorance is rather irrational and may bear high costs for those newsrooms hoping to survive in the upper segment of the media market.

6.2. Perspectives for further research

This contribution has discussed the economics and cultural prerequisites of institutionalizing ombudsmen and press councils, questioning economic rationales and looking for cultural patterns which are favorable when nourishing such institutions in a cross cultural comparison.

When possible, we referred to behavioral economics, as this field of research holds particularly rich insights which may help bridge the gap between assumptions of economically rational, self-interested behavior and empirically observable, more complex behavior, which will always be culturally shaped.

However, it should also be seen that this approach itself may have its limits: As Emanuel Derman has pointed out, researchers have used behavioral economics ‘as a smoke screen to write all kind of papers on pretended irrationalities,’ adding that ‘in particular, those approaches to behavioral economics have flourished which are insinuating that human beings are mentally deficient in estimating probabilities and should therefore be guided by governments with the support of researchers to do what is “good” for them’ (Derman 2012). Either way, a soft approach of paternalistic liberalism (Sunstein and Thaler 2003; Thaler and Sunstein 2009) and co-regulation (Donges 2007) may be highly preferable over direct government enforcement - particularly in the field of media accountability, where stronger governmental intervention will always result in some form of censorship.

There is no doubt that journalism ethics are based on individual behavior as well as on norms set by institutions (Rühl and Saxer 1981). However, individual and institutional behaviors are also shaped by economic factors and cultural patterns. With more systematic reviews of the insights yielded from work in behavioral economics, we hope to provide fresh perspectives on economic incentives in addition to specific construction plans for empowering media accountability institutions. Such institutions might manage unethical decision-making more effectively. However, underlying irrationalities of decision makers and cultural patterns could continue to impede progress.

To put this research into a broader context: prejudices and other shortsightedness still slows the interdisciplinary cooperation between media researchers and economists (Russ-Mohl 2012). During the last decades, an increasing number of economists have begun to analyze – in close cooperation with psychologists, social psychologists, and neuroscientists – the conditions under which human behavior turns to ‘predictable irrationalities,’ and why

there are such deviations from the ‘homo economicus model.’ Their insights are not only revolutionizing economics. If applied more systematically, they might have a similar impact on media and journalism research – stimulating more plausible research hypotheses as well as empirical research and experiments.

There are three foreseeable ‘lines of attack’ for further research:

1. In the area of media accountability the analysis might be deepened: aside from the examples mentioned above, there are more typical fallacies of decision making which lead to irrational behavior and which need to be analyzed in more detail (for an overview: Dobelli 2011 and 2012).

2. As shown in our case study on media accountability, existing insights and research results from behavioral economics might also be used to better understand the decision-making processes in other areas of journalism and media. Some examples that could be analyzed more thoroughly include the relationship between PR experts and journalists, or between media management and newsrooms. For example, it could be taken into account how herd behavior influences the pricing of media products (‘paywalls’), or how irrationalities on the side of students, journalism school administrations, university and government bureaucracies, and employers in the media industry create the existing mismatch of supply and demand in journalism education and in the journalistic labor market. In all these cases, behavioral economics could help to generate plausible research hypotheses as well as explanations to better understand current realities, observable behaviors and undesirable developments. Researchers need to systematically discover the circumstances under which media actors behave ‘predictably irrational’ (Ariely 2008) and become, for example, victims of groupthink (Janis 1972) or herd behavior (Cipriani and Guarino 2008; Stiglitz 2011; Fürst 2013; Iha 2013).

3. In the area of media accountability, as well as in other fields of media research, specific experiments aimed at journalists, media managers, and other media actors need to be developed to empirically test whether and how the existing results of behavioral economics can be applied to these professional groups. Many of the existing results are based on experiments with American business students and may not be transferable in other cultural and professional contexts.

Understanding in more detail how top editors, media managers and other media actors make decisions and what kind of errors they commit should help provide a more realistic evaluation of what kind of normative expectations, incentives, and regulations might be accepted by media practitioners and media users – and which ones will not.

In particular, one relevant question remains: how much should media users be patronized by governments with compulsory levies meant to ensure journalism quality? In recent years, a surprising number of scholars and journalists (e.g. Chesney and Pickard 2011; Downie and Schudson 2009; Habermas 2007; Kiefer 2011) have argued in this direction. One might suspect that even in this area, herd behavior is at work – which seems to play an important role not only in journalism but in research as well, though thus far it has not been well researched (for an early attempt: Kuhn 1967). The risks and side effects of such proposals have not been evaluated adequately (Russ-Mohl 2011), and the principle of proportionality has not been applied to the case to find out whether the same desirable effect might possibly be achieved without forcing citizens to pay more royalties, for example by improving the choice architecture (Sunstein and Thaler 2003; Thaler and Sunstein 2009).

Here, another promising field of interdisciplinary research has opened for journalism researchers and behavioral economists: can socially desirable media consumption be ‘nudged’

- instead of subsidizing media offers which are not in sufficient demand? Might changes in the choice architecture help to reduce the bureaucratic ossification of mammoth public broadcasting bureaucracies, instead of letting them grow further by intransparent public alimentation? Could current price competition in media markets be reversed to quality competition? In present media markets - which are frequently 'markets for lemons' - advertising and royalty-driven media offers clearly mitigate quality offers that are directly financed by audiences. If these audiences were informed citizens - if they were more knowledgeable and more quality conscious - they might decide to spend less money on advertised consumer goods and services (Enzensberger 2013) and much more on high quality journalism. Obviously, there is more joint research work to be done by behavioral economists and journalism researchers. Let's tackle the challenges!

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BIHEJVIORALNA EKONOMIJA I ODGOVORNOST MEDIJA

Rad nudi bliži pogled na tri snažno povezane oblasti odgovornosti medija. Oblasti smo definisali na sledeći način: 1. politika ispravke, 2. proces postupanja po primljenim žalbama i 3. pokrivenost novinarstva i medija od strane medija. Fokusom na Sjedinjene Američke Države, Veliku Britaniju, Nemačku, Švajcarsku i Italiju, pokušaćemo da objasnimo u kojoj meri se “racionalno ekonomsko” ponašanje može pozicionirati u oblasti samo-ispitivanja i kako “predvidivo iracionalni” (Arieli 2008) vlasnici medija, medijski menadžeri i novinari donose odluke, te kako kulturne norme i obrasci ponašanja utiču na odgovornost medija i procesuiranja “nemoralnog” ili neprofesionalnog ponašanja.

Ključne reči: *bihejvioralna ekonomija, odgovornost medija, “racionalno ekonomsko” ponašanje, kulturne norme i obrasci ponašanja.*